she is running the House illegally. Who is he to sit in judgment? He is nobody to sit in judgment here.

SHRI KAMAL MORARKA: What I want to say is that you are not allowing me to raise my point of order. The point of order has to get precedence over everything else.

SHRI N. K. P. SALVE: I am not against the point of order. I am against the comment that he made and I quote. He said: "You are conducting the proceedings illegally." That is highly unfair and improper.

SHRI KAMAL MORARKA: I am allowing this comment to go on record. I want it to be reported in the Press also. All right.

SHRI KAMAL MORARKA: I am saying this with all responsibility and I repeat that I want it to go on record. Every sentence of it. (*Interruptions*)

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I want it to go on record. Did I say it should not go on record? I want it to go on record. Why are you agitating? I am willingly allowing it to go on record. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI KAMAL MORARKA: Madam, an illegal thing cannot become legal by a majority decision.

SHRI N. K. P. SALVE: Madam, the question is who decides illegality. Members can't decide. The Supreme Court decides on many decisions. They reverse their own decisions. But is it not the law of the land that once they decide that decision becomes final? Legality is to be determined by the Chair and not by the Member. You better remember that.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: He is quoting lot of rules. Let him read the rule book. Now, Mr. Minister. (*Interruptions*) Now, I am allowing anything. Anybody now speaking without my permission will not go on record. (*Interruptions*) Mathur Sahib, I am not allowing you. I am not discussing anything further. Please take your seat. (*Interruptions*) I am not permitting you too. Nothing is going on record now, except the Minister's reply. (*Interruptions*) Don't waste time. Mr. Minister, you may speak. You don't have to reply because I have not permitted him now.

DISCUSSION ON THE WORKING OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING—Contd.

THE MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA): For a few days, the hon. Members on both sides made valuable contributions on this very important subject about the functioning of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. Madam, I am grateful to you and to the hon. Members for allowing me to reply to the debate even before other matters are taken up. I am going to reply to the very important points raised by the hon. Members. At this juncture this Department is considering various important issues. I am grateful because this House has decided that this is the first subject matter to be discussed, and like a brainstorming type the entire functioning of my Minister will be discussed. I have not only taken a note of their entire suggestions personally but also the transcript copies of each Member's points are being scrutinised so that while deliberating upon very important issues they could be taken into consideration.

The first issue which most of the Members argued is about the commonly called term "Privatisation of Doordarshan" or flowing from the main subject as to what is the position of the Prasar Bharati Act. Madam, after this Government took over I went into the Department; and naturally this is the most important subject to be considered by us. In the election manifesto of my party, Congress (I) we have made it abundantly clear to the people about it. So whatever positive thing has been assured to the people, relying upon it, they have voted us to power and that should be given effect to, not only what is written there but also in spirit and inten. I may be allowed to quote from

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our manifesto. Let us debate the basic thing of the manifesto. The information media was there under a separate heading in our manifesto in which it starts ""Freedom of information is another precious right. The Congress will make a law in this behalf." With regard to the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting it states "Hitherto broadcasting and telecasting has remained the monopoly of the Government. Technological advances have made obsolete the validity of any claim to such monopoly. The Congress will offer to public corporations which will conform to parameters to be laid down by law broadcasting and telecasting rights." I request the hon. Members to be a little more attentive. "Such corporations will be allowed to function in competition with Prasar Bharati."

The Prasar Bharati Act was kept in cold storage. Unless it is given effect to under section 1 of the Act for notification first and then under section 3 for formation of the Board, there cannot be any competition. The public corporations will be allowed to function in competition with Prasar Bharati. We must have observed that for two years they have debated upon the Prasar Bharati Bill in both the Houses of Parliament. There were a number of amendments to it. After spending a lot of time, with aplication of mind, they have brought this Act of 1990. But to our utter surprise we found that a notification under section 1, that is the Ace coming into being, was not issued. President's assent was obtained. Then it is the motion of the Government to issue a notification under section 1. And then other things start flowing so that the Government immediately becomes ready to issue the section 3 notification for establishment of the Board. Then there are huge things which this Parliament, in their wisdom, thought of doing. What will happen to the employees? What will happen to the employees who did not exercise their option to go to this Corporation? How will they be looked after? These are things which are already there in the Act. Section 1(a) was a simple thing for the Government, then then government, to follow. Then many things would have been resolved in the meantime. It says, "short title, extent and commencement". Section 1(iii) says, "It shall come into force on such date as the Central Government may by notification appoint". This is one of those very few Acts which are not passed in a hurried manner. This was passed after a debate of two years. Both hte Houses of Parliament, in their wisdom, passed it unanimously. Hundreds of amendments were given. The debates that took place are voluminous. Members must have seen them. Very important contributions were made by hon. Members through the research work they had done. Now, this was not implemented by the Government: not just the previous Government, but the Government before that also. It remained absolutely in a fluid form. When the Chandra Shekhar Government came into power. I found from the proceedings that there was a meeting of the Consultative Committee in which it was decided to keep it back... *(Interruptions)*.

SHRI JAGDISH PRASAD MATHUR (Uttar Pradesh): How can be discuss here the meeting of a Consultative Committee?

SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA: I know that a Consultative Committee cannot be criticised.

SHRI RAI MOHAN GANDHI (Uttar Pradesh): It cannot be discussed in the House.

SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA: Very well, I am not discussing it.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: As I gave a ruling in the morning also, anything which is discussed in a Consultative Committee is not disclosed on the floor of the House. So, you cannot disclose it on the floor of the House.

SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA: I bow down to your ruling, Madam. The then Government decided that they would not proceed further with this Act. I found that no action had been taken since the approval of Parliament was given and one nominee appointed under the Act. Even in respect of that nomination, whether an appointment can be made until the Act

comes into force is sort of a legal argument. I do not want to go into that. But that is what has happened. The Act was not even commenced, not even put into force. When it was kept back like that, it transpired that the then Government, that is, the just previous Government, also applied its mind. Naturally, it is for that Government to look into why the Government which brought this Act and had it passed in Parliament did not enforce it. Secondly, when the second Government came in, why were they not serious in putting it into force? I found that so far as the officers were concerned, they kept everything ready. But there was a lack of sense of poiltical direction to implement this Act. Now, I make it clear that I am not giving any excuses by saying that this is what has happened. But facts must be narrated to hon. Members so that they may look into them and find out what will happen so far this Act and the public corporation are concerned (*Interruptions*).

SHRI MENTAY PADMANABHAM (Andhra Pradesh): What is your Government going to do? Please clarify that. Are you going to implement it? Is there any time-bound programme? Can you assure this House that you are going to do it?

SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA: I will certainly do so. I am giving the background. Now, the hon. Members will realise that this is a subject which needs careful attention the whole world pattern including that of India, not only technological advances but also the pattern of giving news, taking news and governing pattern, so much interest is shown by the people so far as All India Radio is concerned and this reaches the illiterate as well as the literate people wherever they are covered by TV and radio and wherever there is purchasing power of the people to buy such a unit and see it. In the meantime, whatever happened, we have studied it, made it complete within the last two months. Now here again the question of Manifesto comes in. By Manifesto, I mean the Congress (I) party Manifesto. (*Interruptions*). In the Congress (I) party Manifesto, it has been stated that it will be completed in the first 365 days. (*Interruptions*). The time given is 365 days from 24th of June 1991 when this Ministry was formed. Then it will offer broadcasting and telecasting rights to the Public Corporation to compete with the Prasar Bharati. When I looked into it, I found that immediately section 13 notification comes in, it does not serve the purpose. Otherwise, in respect of ordinary Acts, as soon as the assent of the President is received, it comes into force or when a notification is issued, it comes into force. Here there is another catch given.

SHRI JAGESH DESAI (Maharashtra): What do you mean by a Public Corporation?

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: [illegible] Desai, don't interrupt. In this way, it will never finish. Have patience. Let him make his point. No interruption, please.

SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA: I will certainly answer all the questions. Now, section 3 refers to Prasar Bharati Broadcasting Corporation of India. As regards establishment and composition of Corporation, section 3(1) states: "With effect from such date as the Central Government may by notification appoint in this behalf, there shall be established for the purposes of this Act a Corporation, to be known as the Prasar Bharati (Broadcasting Corporation of India)"! Therefore it is not only section 1 notification which could be done in a moment's time but section 3 is a notification by which Prasar Bharati Corporation will come into being. What is this Corporation? Section 4 deals with the appointment of Chairman and other Members. Section 5 deals with the powers and functions of Executive Members. It means that it has to be according to the rules prescribed. The term used is, by wisdom of this House and also the Parliament as a whole, as prescribed. That means rules and regulations, all, by which the remuneration of the employees who have opted for Prasar Bharati and who did not opt and want to remain in the Government department has to be fixed. Under the law of the land, you cannot force anyone to take up a non-Govrenment job and you have to afford the facility of option and that has been e[illegible]

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visaged here. All these are to be taken into consideration but nothing has been done. Then who will be the Chairman? Will he be getting salary or will he be on a part-time? What does it mean? Can he work elsewhere and also be a Chairman? The Chairman and the Members will be appointed on the recommendations of the Chairman of the Council of States, who shall be the Chairman of the Committee; the Chairman of the Press Council of India and one nominee of the President of India, by the President of India. Now here also it has been argued by Mr. Kapil Verma at the very beginnign as to what we mean by the nominee of the President of India. Does it mean my nominee? I sit in the Shastri Bhavan and appoint one? If that is so, is it independently thought of? Now I find that this has

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not been done under this Act Act... (*Interruptions*)... But he is a nominee of the President of India. The nominee of the President is thought of like an employee who is appointed in the name of President of India; it is for him to consider this autonomy, independence, which we have thought of. There are three persons, one is Chairman, Council of States, the second is Chairman, Press Council of India and the third is a nominee of the President of India. Is it not necessary for the President to apply his mind independently asking for suggestions or is it that the Minister just as an employee of the Government in the name of the President of India gives his name? Hon. Members may kindly consider this. Does it really go to the feeling of autonomy which was talked about so much at that time? I find reports in the newspapers; although nothing has been done regarding this Act, not even this Act has been commenced or given effect to, somehow or other, under sub-section (c) of Section 4, without the commencement of the Act, the Government appointed a nominee and the Minister did it. Madam, I have looked into it. I am not criticising. I have to make it clear. These are all legal things coming in. Is it possible even though the Act has not commenced that under one section the Government takes power and appoints a nominee? Is it possible when the Act has not even been notified to commence? It is there in the file. An appointment has been made. The President was not consulted. In the first reading I argued at that time; I took part in the debate in the Lok Sabha. I argued this had to be absolutely independent. Some hon. Member suggested that it should be a nominee of the Speaker, Lok Sabha, or the Chairman, Rajya Sabha. Both should decide on the nominee. If we want to give freedom, it has to be real freedom. We cannot give freedom in bondage, then give Agmark of freedom. Therefore, hon. Members, I appeal to you to consider this point because these are the points which would be coming up and I have tried my best to bring out those points during this Session itself... (*Interruptions*)...

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: No interruption. I say, no interruption.

SHRI MENTAY PADMANABHAM: Madam, is he going to discuss the merits and demerits of the Bill?

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Minister, don't yield. Please continue. We should have some order in the House.... (*Interruptions*)...He will abide by the rules. I am abiding by the rules. You please continue.

SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA: Madam, there is a ruling. I have to answer the questions raised by hon. Members.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: According to the rules only.

SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA: Of course, according to the rules.

One point was raised by another hon. Member. It did not occur to me at any time before. Suppose there is, God forbid, a national calamity because of a natural disaster. The President of India or the Prime Minister or the Relief Minister or the Health Minister wants to go on the AIR and broadcast to the people. Can he do so? He will find that he cannot be allowed according to the procedure. A request will be made to the Broadcasting Corporation Board. They may or may not allow him. If there is a persistent default,

they will refuse to do so. Then there is a longdrawn procedure of superseding that Corporation. Now if the President of India feels that there is something of which people must be told forthwith and wants to go on the AIR or on the TV, there is no set procedure straightway. If there is, God forbid, a massive earthquake, and the President of India on the Relief Minister or the Health Minister wants to go on the AIR forthwith, or the officer concerned also wants to address the people, can he go? No. Strightway he cannot do so. The hon. Members will realise that these are points which brook no delay. Even a delay of one hour or two hours might prove disastrous and cause inconvenience to the common people. This has been argued. I have taken note of it. Another point argued is—I have taken note of all these points ....

SHRI KAPIL VERMA (Uttar Pradesh) Have you agreed to this amendments?

SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA: Madam, I cannot agree straightaway. "Where are the powers?" someone argued on behalf of the opposition Some 'non'ble Members argued, "What will happen to the employees? What about their pension? what about their gratuity? What will happen to the propoerty which is being transferred? Is Prasar Bharati Corporation going to pay something back to the Government as regards the property which is being transferred?" I cannot straigh away say, "Yes, it will be done". I have made a high-power committee to go into these details. I will tell them that these are arguments made by the hon'ble Members in the House, find out what should be done regarding these and if possible bring it in this Session or, if not, by the next Session because 365 days is the deadline if we want to keep our manifesto promise to the people. Now, Madam, a point has been raised as far as public corporation is concerned. What does it mean? Sometimes public corporations also create difficulties. I do not blame anyone or any member of the Press because when I told this on the 3rd showing our manifesto, each of the reporters thought one point to be impotrant and, therefore, he highlighted it. That is why each paper gave—not all, some of the papers—one-sides version. Now, what is to be given? Mr. Raj Mohan Gandhi raised this point along with others, but he raised this first as also Mr. Kapil Verma. Kindly see offers to public corporations. Mr. Raj Mohan Gandhi thought, "What does it mean? Is it being secretly done? Are you callig somebody and telling him 'all right, I give it to you'?" Even if the Government want to give largesse, the Supreme Court decision is that there must be parameters laid down by law. Government cannot act at whim. If they want to give largess—they do not—then also there must be guidelines, otherwise it would be treated as a fortuitous action, an action at whim and not of choice. The Government cannot act at will and at random on that and that is why I point out clearly that the offer to the public corporations conform to the parameters laid down by law. Therefore, whatever rules and regulations are made by the Government they have to come to both the Houses of Parliament so that Members may have a debate on the safeguards which we are taking because many apprehensions were raised that people with money will come and take over this Corporation; people with evil designes will get hold of this Corporation and start making all sorts of propaganda and, therefore, public corporations have to be unde rthe parameters laid down by law. In order to get rid of the words "public corporation" sometimes the word "privatisation" is used. I won't say very wrongly but formally it is bein gused. In publice corporations the word'public' is defined in the Oxford Distionary, 1990—we have to take the definition of 'public'; we are all representatives of the people—"concerning the people as a whole; open to or shared by many people; (of service, funds, etc.) provided by or concerning local or central government". Then 'corporation' is defined as "a group of people authorised to act as an individual and recognised in law as a single entity,

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especially in business". This is also from Oxford Dictionary, 1990. Now, 'a group of people authorised to act as an indivíual', what does it mean? According to the present law of India a company registered under the Indian Companies Act is: (a) public limited company; (b) private limited company. A firm registered under the Indian Partnership Act can be also a group of people authorised. a cooperative society registered under the Cooperative Societies Act. That is why I have formed this committee to go in detail as to what type of concepts are likely to come up so that parameters may be decided upon and placed before the House, so that some work can be done. some paper can be placed before the House, so that a debate can take place and we can get the ideas of the representatives of the people....

SHRI SUKOMAL SEN (West Bengal): You are defining it from the dictionary But it is not comprehensive.

SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA: I will answer all questions. Let me develop my points first.

Now. the word 'privatisation' has created some problems somewhere. The Oxford Dictionary defines privatisation thus: Assigned to private as distinct from States control or ownership, denationalisation. Now, pausing here for a moment ,the honourable Members will kindly keep this in mind, because in the press some articles appeared which might mislead them. It is thought by some sections that Prasar Bharati itself, that is, the existing radio and TV, is being handed over to this public corporation. No. Prasar Bharati, as envisaged under the Prasar Bharati Act, when it is implemented, will remain because this is an Act of Parliament and nobody can change it except the Parliament itself. It is no that. It appears that the impression is that when. Prasar Bharati comes into being the Government is going to hand over the entire national network and the state network to a public limited company or a public corporation. No, because the idea is it should be in competition with Prasar Bharati. Therefore, Prasar Bharati must be in existence and it will be in competition with Prasar Bharati. Now, why was this envisaged? There has to be competition. Even though autonomy is given to Prasar Bharati, competitions to be there like so many things said about the media. At present in the media they are having day-to-day autonomy, they are having working autonomy. But still almost every day honourable Members meet some criticism or other because they are having a total monopoly which has really become obsolete. If there is another channel, you can turn to it. you can have your choice. Then I think your freedom of information, of getting information, is taken care of. your idea of an Indian with love for art and culture freedom of the kaleidoscope type, is taken care of and whenever a choice is granted to a person, this is one of the items of freedom he gets. We have been elected to the Lok Sabha with a ballot paper on which are given so many symbols and people are given the choice to stamp on the symbol they choose. That is how they elected us, they elected some party or other. according to their choice. and that is the basis of democracy. Now here whatever Doordarshan gives you, if you do not like it, if you do not want it, you switch it off. Now. a channel comes under the parameters laid down by law. I am saying I am open to everything provide it is good. The parameters have to be thought of by you. Newspapers are doing their work. They are not all enemies of the nation. They are one of the pillars. Yet they are absolutely in private hands and they are working. Wherever Government is controlling any newspapers you find that those are tinted or biased towards the partily which is in power. So long as the newspapers are there, we cannot come to a conclusion and say that they are the enemies of the nation. We have thrust upon them something very powerful and that is the written

word. Reading makes a man perfect and writing prevails over all other things. We all of use rely on them. The time has now come when we Ministers can no more consider ourselves to be the only people who have the right equality, liberty and fraternity. People have placed a great amount of trust upon us. They have voted us to power. Now, it is high time, after 44 years of independence, we lived up to their expectations trust that the people have reposed in us. trust that the eople have reposed in us. We can no more say that we are the Ministers and we are going to act in a particular way. It is because of the Constitution that we are here. We have been elected by the people and it is for the Prime Minister to choose as to who will be the Minister. I would request the hon. Members to look at it objectively Freedom has to be given. But there should also be a choice. The hon. Member from West Bengal, Saralaji, asked me as to why I did not hand it over to the State Government. Now, if you look at it, it is a mere transfer from the Central Government to the State Government. Does it come out of Government control? It does not. Saralaji also said that I had said—I tried to find out whether I had said it, I tried to recapitulate from my memory, but I don't remember having said it—that the State Government in Bengal should not be given the second channel because they would use it for propogating Marxism! I deny having said that. I would not like to make a fool of myself by saying that the Bengal Government would use the second channel to propogate Marxism and that is why it should not be given to them. The trouble with Saralaji is that whenever she finds that something has been written in the newspapers against her party, she will try to shout it down, but when something incorrect has been reported in my case, she will take it up as an issue. They make it their *GITA*...(*Interruptions*)...

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY (Pondicherry) That is the West Bengal Govtrnment's philosophy.

SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA: I know, in other parts of the world, from where the party drawns its inspiration, the ideology is dwindling and falling like a house of cards...(*Interruptions*)...

SHRI MENTAY PADMANABHAM: It is not the question of the Central Government or the State Government of West Bengal...(*Interruptions*)...She wanted to know whether the Central Government is giving a second channel to all the State Governments...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA: That is not the issue. Maybe you were not present when she spoke...(*Interruptions*)...

SHRIMATI SARALA MAHESHWARI (West Bengal): I would like to know whether you ever contradicted your statements...(*Interruptions*)...

SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA: Just handing it over to the State Government, whatever be the political party, will not serve any purpose. It will not serve the purpose for which the Prasar Bharati Bill was thought of. Article 19 of the Constitution did not talk of autonomy. It is not as if the Britishers gave autonomy to the Indian people first, thereafter the dominion status and then independence. No, it is not like that. Mr. Upendra had made it very clear in his speech. He had said that the Prasar Bharati was a stepping stone to achieving autonomy. Under article 19, the first freedom that has been listed is the freedom of speech and expression. It does not mean speech and expression alone, but it also includes receiving of information free from bias and what one chooses. Therefore, the manifesto envisages not one public corporation but public corporations. While trying to get rid of monopoly, we cannot just create another monopoly. A Committee has been formed with Mr. Varadan, Addl. Secretary as the Chairman and with eight other members. The Committee is going through the structure of the

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Bill and is trying to find out if there is any necessity for ammending it. If necessary they will advise me on it. And, certainly, I will place it here and I will consult the Members, the political parties, participating in the debate. If we all agree, we will bring forward the amendement and if you do not agree even to a part of it, then we will see. We will bring forward an amendment if it is necessary to do so. This Committe as already started working and six or seven meetings have been held. I would make it clear to the honourable Members that there is no secret dialogue as alleged by some of the Members. Probably there was a communication gap. Questions were asked in both the Houses of Parliament and I am bound to give the information in Parliament immediately. But, by that time, more and more developments take place and so far whatever developments have taken place, I have given them to the Members of the House so far as the Prasar Bharati and the offer to the public corporation are concerned. If any Member at any time desires to have any information whatsoever regarding this or if anybody has heard about something happening, I want to kill the rumour forthwith if it is a rumour or confirm it if it is correct. Therefore, you are open to talk to me or to write to me so that I can immediately get the information. The reason is simple. I can tell you for certain that there is no hide-an-seek whatsoever You are welcome to ask me questions at any time about anything that you hear or anything that agitates your mind. I will invite you either to write to me or to come to me immediately and I will be able to give you the piece of information which is available to me. As the subject requires expertise, I cannot deal with it myself. Therefore, this Committee has been formed to advise me in what manner a basic thing can be permitted, what could be parameters, at least the gist of the parameters, which could be allowed so that the parameters could be debated by both the Houses of Parliament in order to know what is going to happen so far as the Prasar Bharati and the public corporation competition is concerned. It is because the CNN and Star have started moving and they have become alert. This is the competition, this is the exposure...

SHRI MD. SALIM (West Bengal): Madam, I am on a point of order... (*Interruptions*)...

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: There is no point of order when the Minister is replying. I am overruling your point or order...(*Interruptions*)... Let the Minister first complete his reply. Afterwards, if you want to ask some question, I will permit you...(*Interruptions*)...

SHRI MD. SALIM: Madam, my point of order is not related to the reply. We have taken this up instead of the Calling-Attention Motion because the Minister assured the House that he would finish his reply within thirty minutes...(*Interruptions*)...

SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA: If the honourable Members are not interested, I will cut short my speech...(*Interruptions*)...

SHRI KAPIL VERMA: No, Madam. We want the full reply.

SHRI MD. SALIM: That is what I am saying. Instead of giving the reply, he is telling about some other things... (*Interruptions*)...

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Order, please...(*Interruptions*)...

SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA: That is the problem with them. Anyhow, I am ready to complete it and deal with the points made. These are the points which I wanted to make insofar as the introduction of competition is concerned.

Now, I am coming to the other points raised by the honourable Members. Some Members said, citing the serial on the former Prime Minister, that it is done according to the choice of the people in the organization. Therefore, I have taken a very strong note of it even though enough particulars have not been given. I do not know why the honourable Members should level charges of corruption in this. Therefore, I have told my Department to take note of these things. Dr. Nagen Saikia has given some particulars, some names of some serials. We have taken down all the names. I have already ordered by holding a meeting to find out the details and the circustances under which they were rejected or not considered. Even if the honourable Members do not give any particulars, I appeal to them to write to me... (*Interruptions*)...

SHRIMATI SARALA MAHESHWARI: Madam,... (*Interruptions*)...

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Do not interrupt when the Minister is replying He will answer all your points... (*Interruptions*)...When you are speaking, if somebody interrupts you, how will you feel?... (*Interruptions*)...

SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA: I will answer their questions. I will answer all your questions.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Don't interrupt.

SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA: Allow me to develop...

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Has he finished his reply? He is still on his feet.

SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA: Therefore, Madam, so far as corruption is concerned, I have said that even though it is general, it has to be looked into. And the new Director-General who has taken up, subject to the confirmation by the Cabinet Committeee on Appointments, has been directed, the Secretary, Information & Broadcasting, has been directed to look into in detail why these things even as wisper come up. up. Madam, I have gone through various Departments. As I said, I feel very hurt. When I was here in this Department earlier for one year and eight months, none of the Houses ever even for a day alleged a word of corruption. Now, after coming ever here, over the last two months after an interregnum of five years I hear not only the hon. Members but also the members of the public saying it. When the hon. Members say it in this august House I take it as of higher importance. I have taken it very seriously. Kindly help me. I assure you that firm action would be taken if you help me by giving within 7 days from date—because I have set the ball in action-some particulars, either the name of the serial or the name of the person or the name of the officer or some connecting link. Otherwise, it will be a roving enquiry which might depress very honest and sincere employees—a little over 43,000 are working in this Department.

Therefore, I will...(*Interruptions*).

श्रीमती सरला माहेश्वरी : जहां तक आपके कार्यक्रमों पर पर्दा डालने का सवाल है, हमारे संविधान की जो संवैधानिक ..(व्यवधान)

SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA: Madam, I will definitely ask Sarala Meheshwariji to give it in writing. Or come to me. Give us some particulars, some details and you will see action is taken...

SHRIMATI SARALA MAHESHWARI: Madam, just allow me.

SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA: Then the next point which was stated is about..

श्रीमती सरला माहेश्वरी : महोदया, आप मुझे एक मिनट का समय दें। मंत्री महोदय जी, मैं आप से कहना चाहूंगी, आपने मुझसे कहा कि मुझे लिखित रूप में दे दीजिए। मैं इस बात को कहती हूं कि मुझे लिखित में देने की कोई आवश्यकता नहीं है, क्योंकि मैंने जो अभियोग लगाये हैं, वह एसी०ए०जी० की रिपोर्ट

श्रीमती सरला माहेश्वरी

के आधार पर कहा था आप सी०ए०जी० की रिपोर्ट में देख लीजिए, सारे के सारे आप का लिखा मिल जायेंगे ..(व्यवधान) फिर भी आप ...(व्यवधान) एलीगेशन की बात करते हैं । ...(व्यवधान)

SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA: Madam, I think it is being mixed up. Kindly go throughout the C&AG Report. I was going to answer you. Please allow me.

SHRIMATI SARALA MAHESHWARI: Why should I give in writing? The CAG Report...

SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA: Madam, the CAG Report was mentioned. We have looked into it. It is 1989-90 CAG Report which has only commented on commissioned programmes of Doordarshan. Commissioned programme of Doordarshan has been commented upon and not corruption. Kindly read it.

SHRIMATI SARALA MAHESHWARI: Madam, allow me just a minute. It is wasteful expenditure made by your Department communication gap in your Department, and due to that you have to pay double the money to different companies.

SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA: I think, we are at cross purposes. The allegation of corruption is different from what is stated as... (*Interruption*).

SHRIMATI SARALA MAHESHWARI: What is the meaning of corruption?

SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA: Go on arguing like this.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: You continue your speech.

SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA: Therefore, so far as CAG Report is concerned, it is not that any Member mentions that and thereafter action is taken. Statutorily action is a must. The Report has brought out procedural shortcomings, the absence of norms to be followed in the Costing Committee has been brought out, poor monitoring of the progress of the sanctioned programmes has been highlighted, procedural improvement has been called for. If the hon. Member is only satisfied with the action taktn on CAG Report, action has been initiated in all these programmes not because the Members are saying, but we are bound to take action under the law of the land. But I was on a different point. I hope the hon. Members understand my point. That is regarding corruption. I want to take such steps, Madam, and I am telling this august House that in the next session, not a single Member would stand up to say anything about corruption so far as this is concerned. I have got only two months' time now. As I said, one year eight months I was here in this Department kindly examine nowhere ever a word of corruption was uttered by even an hon. Member. But when this has been done, Madam... (*Time Bell rings*) When the news bulletins on the Doordarshan and the AIR have been commented upon. We have looked into the contents of the bulletin. So far as the Radio is concerned, Madam, we have found that six hours in the night time is remaining wholly unused. You will be happy to know that we have decided that from the 2nd October this year, on the Radio within six hours there would be five minutes' bulletins so that that time is also covered and whoever is interested will be able to get absolutely up to date news over the All India Radio. This has been already finalised. So far as this plan is concerned, the details are being worked out. Madam...

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Now we have lunch hour.

SHRI RAJ MOHAN GANDHI: (Uttar Pradesh): We should continue.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: We can have it afterwards, after the Calling Attention. (*Interruptions*) I take the sense of the House. Shall we not sit during the lunch hour? (*Interruptions*).

SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA: I will take only five minutes more.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: If he finishes in five minutes and if there are clarifications, then it would not be over.

AN HON. MEMBER: We can skip the lunch... (*Interruptions*).

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Let it be decided whether we want to sit during the lunch hour?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No, no. (*Interruptions*).

SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA: Madam, so far as the news on the Doordarshan are concerned, we have taken note of what the Members have said Mr. Saikia has asked who are the persons who are giving Parliament News. I had the same question in my mind, because, as I said, during one year and eight months in my previous term the Parliament News was covered, you will find from the debate not a single Member complained. I feel very sorry. I myself heard and also got complaints from hon. Members that even names are not properly pronounced. Someone is given as someone else. Now, these are, as I said, without blaming anyone. Some are taken from various newspapers—as Reports. None of them are Doordarshan Reporters or the All India Radio Reporters. It was decided that they should be taken from various newspapers. I have got the full list. When Mr. Saikia showed interest, I will hand over that list or I will lay it on the Table of the House so that hon. Members can look at it, because there are thirty names and I do not want to read out the names. They are from various newspaper organizations, And naturally we have to look into the list afresh because mistakes occurred, as Dr. Saikia said, last night even—in spite of telling them to look into the matter properly.

Now, Madam, a demand was made: why don't you increase the time of the News? When it was made, we made a rough calculation. The transmission at present on the National Channel is 420 minutes per day and the National News Bulletin comes to 80 minutes. That is, 20 per cent of the transmission time is taken. This is excluding Parliament News, which is English 10 minutes and Hindi 10 minutes. Still when the Members said that there is a lot of news fall-out and time could be increased, I have told the officers to work for it, how much time could be increased and at what time, whether the time should be increased or we find another slot to give news so that the people who are asking for news would be given.

A demand was made to televise the proceedings in Parliament. This was gone into, not in detail. But it appears, Madam, that resource constraint will stand in the way. It may be possible if from the Budget of the Parliament we are helped or both the Parliament and also the Information and Broadcasting Ministry share it because it would be necessary that a time slot has to be fixed. Then there are both the Houses. Therefore, if it is Question Hour only, one hour-one hour; if it is only debate. . (*Interruptions*)...These are the things which, Madam, only you in this House and the hon. Speaker on the other House or the Chairman will...

SHRI M. S. GURUPADASWAMY (Uttar Pradesh): Parliament is not an earning organisation.

SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA: It is not an earning organisation but they get Budget. Madam, I have found from the experts, with whom I talked, it has to be fixed here. It cannot be taken away. It has to be fixed here and its requirement is special type of high sensitivity camera because it was examined that the light which is obtaining here will not be enough. It is called a low light. Therefore, high sensitivity camera would be required as is being used by other Parliaments. Because we are here for the whole day, the light has been made in such a manner that it does not affect us and we get it as a natural type of light. For TV programmes light is very low in both the Houses of Parliament. So, the high sensitivity cameras would have to be imported because they are not available in India. An automatic system would have to be evolved because of questions-answers and a Member speaking from this side to that side. It will not be possible to move the camera so quickly as is required to be done.

[Shri Ajit Kumar Panja]

Regarding serials, I found that the serials pending which were called for by the previous Government are 3514 in number and in respect of 10 main categories, each one had to pay Rs. 2000 for processing charges with their application. I have also found that already a huge number of committees have been formed and some committees have started working. As rightly suggested by some hon. Members from both sides...

SHRI VITHALBHAI M. PATEL (Gujarat): No committee is working. Why are you giving wrong information?

SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA: I have not given wrong information. I am saying, committees have been formed by the previous Government and the committees are so varied in number and so many people are involved in it. Therefore, these committees are to be look into afresh. I have given direction that at least, those from whom Government has taken money *i.e.* Rs. 2000 per serial, are required to be disposed of by the respective committee on merit by the end of this year. I have given a target i.e. by 30th December, 1991. We cannot keep it pending like that. For that reason, if we want to increase the number of committee members then we have to do so.

Advertisements and consumerism have been commented upon. But as...

SHRI VITHALBHAI M. PATEL: If necessary you strengthen the committees and see that they read the script and not just dispose of it.

SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA: As I said, "if necessary." We cannot just change. If I find members are not attending or members are unwilling to come, or they have no motivation for that subject then certainly I am going into it. I have already started. All my officers are busy. As I said, it has to be disposed of by 30th December, 1991 positively. Now, the consumerism and advertisements have been commented upon. I find the rule which was . . .

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: How long will you take?

SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA: I will conclude my submission on this point. In 1957, All India Radio Act fixed up 10 per cent of the time for advertisements. And that we are really giving. Now it appears that Doordarshan is giving 2.5 per cent of the telecast time for the advertisements. The All India Radio Act of 1957 allows 10 per cent as permissible limit. Madam, I think these are the general issues which the hon. Members talked about.

Some hon. Members have said about Bhopal. I immediately checked up. Mr. Suresh Pachouri and Mrs. Veena Verma have raised this point. I immediately checked up. I found out and I am told technically by the end of this year Bhopal is going to get a full-fledged TV station. That is so far as Bhopal is concerned . . .

DR. RATNAKAR PANDEY (Uttar Pradesh): And about Varanasi?

SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA: The hon. Member mentions about Varanasi. Though he did not speak, I will answer.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: We have to adjourn the House for lunch; it cannot go on.

SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA: I will answer their questions at the end of my reply.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Then we will not have time for lunch. I have also a meeting to attend with the Leader of the House and leaders of various parties.

SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA: I have replied to all the major points raised. On the points raised about Field Publicity and Song and Drama Division, my colleague dealt with the subject yesterday. She dealt with other matters also that were raised.

I suppose if there be any questions from the hon. Members, I will certainly like to answer. These are my submissions on the points raised.

SHRI RAJ MOHAN GANDHI: Some very important issues have not been clarified. Firstly, he saw many imperfections, as he said, in the Prasar Bharati Act. He also quoted from his manifesto that within 365 days, the Act is going to be implemented. So, if there are imperfections which he wishes to remove, let him do so, but let him give a clear date by when he will implement the Prasar Bharati Act. That is one clarification I want to ask.

Secondly, on the question of privatisation, I am afraid, he wishes to have the cake and eat it too. He wishes to embark on the road to privatisation but with the help of the Oxford dictionary he wishes to prove that it is not privatisation. As Mr. Swaminathan said yesterday, if he really believes in privatisation, let him come out with it frankly. In their written answer on the 29th August, they clearly welcomed this privatisation. And if he wishes me to prove it, I will prove it from the answer from his own Ministry where they have welcomed privatisation. But they say it is not privatisation. Madam Deputy Chairman, with a clear sense of responsibility and with great reluctance I levy the charge that they are seeking to hoodwink us, that they are sayigng one thing and mean something else. If they believe in privatisation, let him have the courage to say so clearly, and not take recourse to technicalities. If, on the other hand, they have not made up their mind at all let them say that 'we do not, as yet have a policy for the future of T. V. in India'

My last point is on the question of corruption. It is all very well to say: 'Give me the details and I will deal with it in seven days'. I welcome that assurance. But the far more important point is, you do not have the machinery for examining complaints. If the Minister will give an assurance that there will be a machinery and an open hearing, a forum, where those who had given their programmes which were rejected, can go and complain, and there will be a public hearing and reasons given why a particular thing is accepted or rejected, then and then only that hearing and due to publicity and exposure, can this corruption be tackled. Do you think a film-maker who has to go again and again to some person, will come and say that he has been asked to give a bribe? He will never say it. If the Minister believes that that film-maker will say it, then he can believe anything. If he wants to remove corruption, let him have an open hearing; let there be a procedure for examination of complaints. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: You mentioned about the cake. That is really making all of us hungry. Mr. Desai, you want to say something?

SHRI JAGESH DESAI: As Mr. Raj Mohan Gandhi has expressed his doubts, I also have some doubts. I would like to ask to what they mean by public corporation. As I understand, public corporations are only companies owned by the Government. Whether that is the concept of the Government, or whether they also want to have some public companies with different shareholders—what is the concept of the Government regarding public corporation? As I understand the term, it means 'public company'. The Minister should clarify whether I am right or wrong. I would like to know whether the Government is keen to give the use of the second channel to private persons.

Will the Government reconsider this and see that only the Government companies are allowed to compete with the Prasar Bharati? They have different concepts. Please clarify these points.

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA (West Bengal): Yesterday, I had raised a number of points. I feel the Minister might have forgotten them. My point is, while going through the news bulletin, it is seen that important news-items are left out. I had given a number of examples.

SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA: I have talked about it.

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA: You have not said anything. What is the code by which the Minister would like to ensure that news bias would get predominance over non-news bias? What is the

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code by which the selection is made? Secondly, there is a contradiction in his department; I do not know whether he would like to admit this or not. There is a growing contradiction between the Indian News Service and the people who are recruited from the journalists' circle. It is because of this that there is a feeling among the people who have been recruited from the journalists' circle that they have not been given freedom and there is unnecessary rigorousness. I would like to know how the Minister would like to settle this contradiction. Thirdly, I would like to know as to how the Minister is going to ensure—if he inducts the Corporation, whatever may be the nomenclature—that this Corporation and the control and influence of the Corporation on the media will be able to conform to the standards and the directives of the Government of which he is the Minister.

PROF. SOURENDRA BHATTACHARJEE (West Bengal): I would like to raise one point.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I am sorry. I will adjourn the House for lunch and you can have the answer after the lunch...(*Interruptions*) We have gone beyond the lunch-time. We will have it after the Calling Attention is over...(*Interruptions*)

PROF. SOURENDRA BHATTACHARJEE: I will take just one minute.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I cannot ask everybody... (*Interruptions*) Shall I tell you, we have taken more time than was allotted...(*Interruptions*) There are other Members who have got important business also and I have got one...(*Interruptions*) Let the Minister answer.

SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA: If you want to ask anything later, I shall clarify your point. So far as the three points raised by Mr. Gandhi are concerned, in regard to the implementation of the Act, the time-schedule which was given by the previous Government could not be maintained. Now, I have to start from scratch... (*Interruptions*) Therefore, the implementation of the Act within 365 days, as I said, from the 24th of June, 1991... (*Interruptions*).

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Bhattacharjee, Please don't interrupt. He is replying. Please hear.

SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA: I make it clear that there is no question of hoodwinking anybody. As I said, when we want to bring openness, we cannot go on doing both the things, which this Government never believes, that is, hoodwinking and also saying that it is openness. I can say for certain that the word 'privatisation' as commonly used is not envisaged in the public corporation theory and the hon. Member just now said what is meant by a public corporation. It is a Government corporation. I make it clear that it is not like the Sindri Fertiliser Corporation or the Damodar Valley Corporation. There will be no independence then. A public corporation is (a) a public limited company; (b) where a majority of the shares is held by the public and (c) a co-operative society.

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA: Can you give me an example? We have just visualised it but not in reality.

SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA: I can give umpteen number of examples from the developed countries. They have laid down a law by which the Government is bound...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA: Can you categorise the corporations which fall under this category?

SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA: There are so many.

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA: Can you give an example?

SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA: There are so many companies registered under the Indian Companies Act. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI GURUDAS GUPTA: These are owned by the private citizens, not by the Government.

SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA: 'Public limited company' is a different concept. A private limited company...(*Interruptions*)

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Gurudas Das Gupta, let him finish. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA: 'Private limited company' is a different concept. It is a judicial...(*Interruptions*) Government and non-Government. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA: It is absolutely private. The shareholders are private citizens. (*Interruptions*) It is the private citizens who control it. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI RAJ MOHAN GANDHI: Madam, we are witnessing a jugglery of words. We do not want privatisation. But we hate hypocrisy more than privatisation.

SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA: Madam, I am elected by the people. Mr. Raj Mohan Gandhi should realise that we are elected to power by the people. I have been elected to the Lok Sabha. I have had my public trial. The jugglery of words or hypocrisy, whoever uses or indulges in, suffers it. We have been elected to the Lok Sabha and come here with a command. I am sure Members....(*Interruptions*)

SHRI JAGESH DESAI: You cannot denigrate the Rajya Sabha. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA: I am not saying anything against the Members of the Rajya Sabha. No. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI M. S. GURUPADASWAMY: May I just take a minute?

SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA: Most certainly. ((*Interruptions*)

SHRI M. S. GURUPADASWAMY: Let me say. He has yielded. (*Interruptions*)

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: He is talking in terms of public. He is elected by the people.(*Interruptions*)

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA: All of us are not nominated Members of the House. We are as much elected. (*Interruptions*).

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: He did not mention about the Rajya Sabha. I do not think so, (*Interruptions*)

SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA: Madam, I have not said anything about the Rajya Sabha Members. That was least in my mind. When you are saying 'hoodwinking,' 'hypocrisy', etc., I only said that we should not use such strong words. (*Interruption*)

SHRI M. S. GURUPADASWAMY: There is a little bit of confusion on the concept of 'public limited company'. I respect his views. But I maintain that a public Corporation under the Company Law is a private enterprise.

SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA: Yes.

SHRI M. S. GURUPADASWAMY: If that is understood, let him say that he wants to give this to a private enterprise.

SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA: I want to make it clear. One thing must be made clear. It does go to a sole person or a few persons, which is not envisaged by the law of the land. (*Interruptions*)

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Jagesh Desai, please, let him complete the sentence.

SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA: A non-Government institution where Government has no control whatsoever, (*Interruptions*)

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA: It is absolutely private. No Government control.

SHRI M. S. GURUPADASWAMY: Under the law, public limited companies are dominated by vested interests, by capitalists. That means this is going in the hands of capitalists, a few capitalise. That is the meaning.

SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA: No, no, there are so many cooperatives...

SHRI RAJ MOHAN GANDHI: He says that it will not go to one capitalist. That is enough.

SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA: The next point raised by Mr. Das Gupta was that important news was left out. When I made this point I do not know he was there or I could not make myself clear. I said that I am looking into the entire thing. So many complaints are received about the news left out. This is because sometimes there is a time constraint, within 10 minutes many things could not be covered, even Parliament news and other news. This national news bulletin is a fall out from all over the world, including India. Therefore, whatever item is missed out, I am sure it is not done intentionally. What news should come in immediately, it is decided by an expert sitting there...

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA: One moment. I gave an intance. Yesterday the Communist Party of India and the Marxist Party of India had given their resolution on developments in the Soviet Union to the Press. It was printed by every newspaper but it was left out by Doordarshan only. Now he says that it is not a Parliament News Bulletin, it is a National News Bulletin.

SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA: I can only say that is the place where the Government should seldom interfere. As the position of TV and Radio stands, whatever hon. Members have said I will surely pass it on to them. In fact I have told them to analyse each point made by the Members here and make the reply ready. If I am unable to cover all the points today, I will write to the Members so that they may know the reaction of the Government on the points made by them. I know there would not be enough time to answer each point made by the hon. Members.

SHRI KAPIL VERMA: There should be in-depth analysis of the news every day.

SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA: By whom?

SHRI KAPIL VERMA: By television.

SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA: So far as ensuring whether the public corporation will conform to the parameters laid down by the law, these are the points made during this debate which will be taken into consideration. It is not a final thing. Madam, as I said in the beginning, this House has rightly decided to dilate and make learned discourse on this very subject matter. These are all the important inputs which have come in and, I am sure, the parameters laid down by law will be taken care of by this august House. This House is powerful enough to see how those provisions are to be enforced. The Parliament is supreme. It can make whatever law in its wisdom it likes to make. We will see that competition also comes in. People's creative art cannot be released unless freedom is given. When the freedom is given, I am sure we will be ushering in a new era by which pith and substance of our Constitution would be given effect to. The Preamble of the Constitution starts with the freedom to the people. It says: We, the people of India, ardent to ourselves this Constitution. Let us give that trust back to our people, to the nation.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The House is adjourned for lunch for one hour, till 3.00 p.m.

The House then adjourned for lunch at two of the clock.